

481—15.2(10A) Canon 2. A presiding officer shall perform administrative judicial duties impartially, competently, and diligently.

15.2(1) *Giving precedence to administrative judicial duties.* The administrative judicial duties, as prescribed by law, shall take precedence over all of a presiding officer's personal and extrajudicial activities.

15.2(2) *Impartiality and fairness.* A presiding officer shall uphold and apply the law, and shall perform all administrative judicial duties fairly and impartially.

15.2(3) *Bias, prejudice, and harassment.*

a. A presiding officer shall perform all administrative judicial and other duties without bias or prejudice.

b. A presiding officer shall not, in the performance of administrative judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice or engage in harassment, including but not limited to bias, prejudice, or harassment based upon race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation, and shall not permit others subject to the presiding officer's direction and control to do so.

c. A presiding officer shall require lawyers and party representatives in proceedings before the presiding officer to refrain from manifesting bias or prejudice or engaging in harassment, based upon attributes including but not limited to race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation, against parties, witnesses, lawyers, party representatives, or others.

d. The restrictions of paragraphs 15.2(3) "b" and "c" do not preclude presiding officers, lawyers, or party representatives from making legitimate reference to the listed factors, or similar factors, when they are relevant to an issue in a proceeding.

15.2(4) *External influences on administrative judicial conduct.*

a. A presiding officer shall not be swayed by public clamor or fear of criticism.

b. A presiding officer shall not permit family, social, political, financial, or other interests or relationships to influence the presiding officer's administrative judicial conduct or judgment.

c. A presiding officer shall not convey or permit others to convey the impression that any person or organization is in a position to influence the presiding officer.

15.2(5) *Competence, diligence, and cooperation.*

a. A presiding officer shall perform administrative judicial and other duties competently and diligently.

b. A presiding officer shall cooperate with other presiding officers and other executive branch employees in the administration of agency business.

15.2(6) *Ensuring the right to be heard.*

a. A presiding officer shall accord to every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding, or that person's lawyer or authorized representative, the right to be heard according to law.

b. A presiding officer may encourage parties to a proceeding and their lawyers or authorized representatives to settle matters in dispute but shall not act in a manner that coerces any party into settlement.

15.2(7) *Responsibility to decide.* A presiding officer shall hear and decide matters assigned to the presiding officer, except when disqualification is required by subrule 15.2(11) or other law.

15.2(8) *Decorum and demeanor.*

a. A presiding officer shall require order and decorum in proceedings before the presiding officer.

b. A presiding officer shall be patient, dignified, and courteous to parties, board members, witnesses, lawyers, party representatives, agency staff, agency officials, and others with whom the presiding officer deals in an official capacity, and shall require similar conduct of lawyers, party representatives, and others subject to the presiding officer's direction and control.

15.2(9) *Ex parte communications.*

a. A presiding officer shall not initiate, permit, or consider ex parte communications, or consider other communications made to the presiding officer outside the presence of the parties or their lawyers, concerning a pending matter or impending matter, except as permitted by Iowa Code section 17A.17.

b. A presiding officer shall not investigate facts in a matter independently and shall consider only the evidence presented and any facts that may be officially noticed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.14.

15.2(10) *Statements on pending and impending cases.*

a. A presiding officer shall not make any public statement that might reasonably be expected to affect the outcome or impair the fairness of a pending matter or impending matter before the presiding officer or another presiding officer in the same agency, or make any nonpublic statement that might substantially interfere with a fair hearing.

b. A presiding officer shall not, in connection with cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the presiding officer, make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the presiding officer's adjudicative duties.

c. A presiding officer shall require others subject to the presiding officer's direction and control to refrain from making statements that the presiding officer would be prohibited from making by paragraphs 15.2(10) "a" and "b."

d. Notwithstanding the restrictions in paragraph 15.2(10) "a," a presiding officer may explain agency procedures and may comment on any proceeding in which the presiding officer is a party in a personal capacity.

e. Subject to the requirements of paragraph 15.2(10) "a," a presiding officer may respond directly or through a third party to allegations in the media or elsewhere concerning the presiding officer's conduct in a matter.

15.2(11) *Disqualification.*

a. A presiding officer shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the presiding officer's impartiality might reasonably be questioned, including but not limited to the following circumstances:

(1) The presiding officer has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or a party's lawyer or other representative, or has personal knowledge of facts that are in dispute in the proceeding.

(2) The presiding officer knows that the presiding officer, the presiding officer's spouse or domestic partner, or a person within the third degree of relationship to either of them, or the spouse or domestic partner of such a person is:

1. A party to the proceeding, or an officer, director, general partner, managing member, or trustee of a party;

2. Acting as a lawyer or party representative in the proceeding;

3. A person who has more than a de minimis interest that could be substantially affected by the proceeding; or

4. Likely to be a material witness in the proceeding.

(3) The presiding officer knows that he or she, individually or as a fiduciary, or the presiding officer's spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child, or any other member of the presiding officer's family residing in the presiding officer's household, has an economic interest in the subject matter in controversy or in a party to the proceeding.

(4) The presiding officer, while a presiding officer, has made a public statement, other than in an agency proceeding, decision, opinion, or order, that commits or appears to commit the presiding officer to reach a particular result or rule in a particular way in the proceeding or controversy.

(5) The presiding officer:

1. Served as a lawyer in the matter in controversy or was associated with a lawyer who participated substantially as a lawyer in the matter during such association;

2. Served in governmental employment and in such capacity participated personally and substantially as a lawyer or public official concerning the proceeding, or has publicly expressed in such capacity an opinion concerning the merits of the particular matter in controversy; or

3. Was a material witness concerning the matter.

(6) The presiding officer personally investigated, prosecuted, or advocated in connection with the matter, the specific controversy underlying the matter, or another pending factually related matter, or pending factually related controversy that may culminate in a contested case, involving the same parties, or is subject to the authority, direction, or discretion of any person who has personally investigated,

prosecuted, or advocated in connection with that contested case, the specific controversy underlying that contested case, or a pending factually related contested case or controversy, involving the same parties. But the presiding officer is not required to disqualify himself or herself solely because the presiding officer determined there was probable cause to initiate the proceeding.

b. A presiding officer shall keep informed about the presiding officer's personal and fiduciary economic interests and make a reasonable effort to keep informed about the personal economic interests of the presiding officer's spouse or domestic partner and minor children residing in the presiding officer's household.

c. A presiding officer subject to disqualification under this rule, other than for bias or prejudice under subparagraph 15.2(11)"a"(1), may disclose on the record the basis of the presiding officer's disqualification and may ask the parties and their lawyers or representatives to consider, outside the presence of the presiding officer, whether to waive disqualification. If, following the disclosure, the parties and lawyers or party representatives agree, without participation by the presiding officer, that the presiding officer should not be disqualified, the presiding officer may participate in the proceeding. The agreement shall be incorporated into the record of the proceeding.

15.2(12) *Supervisory duties.*

a. A presiding officer shall require others subject to the presiding officer's direction and control to act in a manner consistent with the presiding officer's obligations under this Code.

b. A presiding officer with supervisory authority for the performance of other presiding officers shall take reasonable measures to ensure that those presiding officers properly discharge their administrative judicial responsibilities, including the prompt disposition of matters before them.

15.2(13) Reserved.

15.2(14) *Disability and impairment.* A presiding officer having a reasonable belief that the performance of a lawyer, party representative, or another presiding officer is impaired by drugs or alcohol, or by a mental, emotional, or physical condition, shall take appropriate action, which may include a confidential referral to a lawyer or employee assistance program.

15.2(15) *Responding to administrative judicial and lawyer misconduct.*

a. A presiding officer having knowledge that another presiding officer has committed a violation of this Code that raises a substantial question regarding the presiding officer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a presiding officer in other respects shall inform the appropriate authority.

b. A presiding officer having knowledge that a lawyer has committed a violation of the Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct that raises a substantial question regarding the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects shall inform the appropriate authority.

c. A presiding officer who receives information indicating a substantial likelihood that another presiding officer has committed a violation of this Code shall take appropriate action.

d. A presiding officer who receives information indicating a substantial likelihood a lawyer has committed a violation of the Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct shall take appropriate action.

e. This rule does not require disclosure of information gained by a presiding officer while participating in an approved lawyers assistance program.

15.2(16) *Cooperation with disciplinary authorities.*

a. A presiding officer shall cooperate and be candid and honest with a lawyer disciplinary agency or other appropriate authority investigating a violation of this Code or the Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct.

b. A presiding officer shall not retaliate, directly or indirectly, against a person known or suspected to have assisted or cooperated with an investigation of a presiding officer or a lawyer.

[ARC 3524C, IAB 12/20/17, effective 1/24/18]